

WRESTLING FORUM

APRIL 30, 1988

VOLUME III

ISSUE 8

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GEE...HOW DO I START???

Usually the words to begin this bulletin come pretty easy, but these are getting clogged up somewhere between my brain and my fingers. I guess I should do some thanking first, then get to the bad news. So here goes nothing...

Several months ago I printed a letter by a disgruntled reader. He was upset by all the personal stuff we have here in the Forum. His heel turn was totally unexpected and a bunch of babyface readers came to my rescue to save me from his vicious sneak attack (I've been watching too much wrestling, huh?). Anyway, most of the readers referred to something that seemed to be spontaneous. That was a thing they called family. They said that I had created a "family or readers"; a bunch of totally unrelated individuals (other than their love for wrestling) who were brought together by the "familiar tones" of my writing style. I had pretty much dismissed that with a familiar two syllable word, the first syllable of which is "bull".

Boy was I wrong.

Last issue I wrote that my daughter Kelly had been hospitalized. She was out and on her way to recovery when the issue was mailed out. Let me tell you, folks, we could tell when that bulletin hit your mailbox. Mary took a record number of calls that night (even more than the night they showed the Flair-Garvin title change on TBS and everyone wanted to know was this the real thing or not). No one wanted to talk to me (obvious from the fact that they called while I was at work). They just wanted to know how Kelly was doing. Genuine concern. To say the least, Mary, Kelly and I were overwhelmed.

While I am home to answer the phone, several readers who called and talked to me started their conversations with "How's Kelly?". Even when calling to find out who won the Crockett Cup, the first question was always about Kelly. Thank you all. You can't believe the feeling that gives us!

Also thanks to those who sent cards. She also got a few autographed pictures of some of the guys who regularly read, and she appreciates that as well. She's doing fine now (get ready for some tongue in cheek stuff) but I think she had some brain damage from the high fever cos she now thinks Dusty Rhodes is the greatest thing since sliced bread (no, he didn't send a card...I can't explain this other than the brain damage angle).

Now the bad news. We're going to have to raise our price slightly. Effective May 30, 1988 (one month) the price of the Forum will be \$1.50 per issue. You can still subscribe for up to six months worth. For anyone who wants to send in a subscription at the old rates, do so now or forever hold your peace. Last issue, even with the 24 pages (compared to our regular 28) we came close to losing money. This is a lot of fun to put together every two weeks, but there has to be a little more than 50¢ per hour in it in order for it to continue (profit on last issue figured out to about 46.7¢ per hour for every hour we worked on it). The postal rates haven't helped especially when they cut the services so much. I could write a whole page on that alone, but this is a wrestling bulletin...let's just suffice to say that 25¢ is about the cheapest you'll find anywhere for a storage service.

Well, enough jibber jabber. There's lots of stuff to cover this time so let's check in with our weatherman Jeff Siegel and see how our wrestling barometer did this month...

THE WRESTLING BAROMETER: APRIL, 1988

Welcome to the April edition of "The Wrestling Barometer", Wrestling Forum's exclusive monthly look at what's hot and what's not in the wacky world of professional wrestling!

A surprisingly slow month for the "Barometer"--perhaps not-so-surprising when you consider how many opportunities there were this month for readers to cast their votes and opinions on "Super Sunday". An interesting "Barometer", nevertheless. While the point totals were small by comparison, the message behind them came shining through.

As usual, we begin with a quick review of the procedure that's used for tallying "Barometer" entries: 5 points is awarded for a first place vote, 3 points is awarded for a second place vote, 1 point is awarded for a third place vote, and $\frac{1}{2}$ point is awarded for every item that is included on a voter's list from fourth place on. Then, a minimum point total is arbitrarily decided upon for inclusion in this column. The minimum point total allows us to focus on the month's major trends.

Now, on to the April results:

WHAT'S HOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. Clash of the Champions (28 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
2. Billy Jack Haynes^{II} new promotion (21 points)
3. Midnight Express-Fantastics brawl (17 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)

WHAT'S NOT

(NEEDED TO QUALIFY: 15 POINTS)

1. Wrestlemania IV (27 points)
2. The Midnight Rider angle (22 $\frac{1}{2}$ points)
3. Four Horsemen vitamins (16 points)

Notes: No surprise as far as the top vote-getters are concerned. The success of "Clash" and the disappointment of "WM IV" have been beaten to death since March 27. All that need be said here is that the "Barometer" seemed to validate what has already been said over and over....Interesting that Billy Jack Haynes^{II} new venture made such a strong showing. As an added note, not a one of his point-getting votes came from any readers in the Pacific Northwest. So it looks like BJ has stirred the interest of fans around the country....And then there's Dusty. Regardless of how many "Barometer" qualifiers there are in a given month, or how slow the voting may be, Big Dust seems to always find a way to stick his two cents in (doesn't that reek of familiarity???) This month was no exception. The Midnight Rider angle appears to be--in the words of readers Stephen Meyerson from Brooklyn, New York--"a Bad Dream, not an American one"... Personally, I find it hard to believe that the Four Horsemen vitamins made the down side of the ledger. You mean that some folks out there actually take them seriously? (And does Virgil get an unlimited supply???)

The deadline for May "Barometer" ballots is May 22. As always, entries and comments should be sent to:

JEFF SIEGEL
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AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

I'm not sure why I continue to devote a page to the AWA let alone one that's reduced. It continues to amaze me that the promotion that was such a power in my childhood has completely collapsed like this one. The past five months have been the worst, and you can trace the problem right back to December when the AWA ran only about four live shows. December is usually their hottest month and instead of going out after business, they held a gigantic pity party and set the stage for their final shows.

This month, I understand that they are again only running a few shows, and now are considering those held in high school gyms to be major shows. They have gone as far as to book shows in bars now (at least in Iowa). Someone explained the logic of holding cards in bars and I'll try here to relay the logic to you.

Verne goes in and offers the show to the owners. He gets a guarantee of say \$2000 (that may not even be near the ballpark let alone in it). The bar then can sell tickets or have a cover charge (which amounts to an admission fee, but you get a certain number of drinks included in the price). The selling point for the wrestling promotion is that the bar can expect to sell a lot more drinks during a wrestling show than say a country western band. The promotion is usually comparable in fees to the bands as well. The bar owner figures that not only will he have his regular customers, but also the novelty of wrestling in a place like his might bring in a few more as well. The wrestlers go home with a guarantee and the bar owner makes a little profit to boot. At least, that's the theory. Sometimes it works sometimes it doesn't.

The worst part of all this has to be the reduced security from the arenas that they're used to working in. From personal experience, I know what a crowd can get like if they've had a little too much to drink and the security is lax. I figure if I can get a crowd worked up, the guys who do it for a living ought to be able to do it a bunch better and that equates to potential trouble.

Verne also has another bright idea. He's using the AWA mostly as a booking organization now, offering to be more or less a wrestler's agent. If another promotion needs a wrestler, all they have to do is call Verne and he negotiates a price then books the wrestler. He gets a cut off the top for doing the booking and exposing the wrestler on his national TV show on ESPN. Can you believe this? An employment agency for wrestlers? I'm not sure if this is a stroke of genius or the latest ravings of a madman. In theory, it should work, but whether or not other promotions are going to want to deal with the little bald headed troll is something else entirely.

Meanwhile the talent is there. The Rockers, The R&R Express, Tanaka and Diamond and a bunch of Sharkey guys are there for the asking. With the talent he's got, Verne ought to go back to square one and start hitting the towns around his home base and building his business again. What does he have to lose?

WRESTLERS ARE PEOPLE TOO

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second part of Bill Hanrahan's observations that we started last issue.

I met some of the WWF guys backstage at the Capital Center about two years ago.

HULK HOGAN - not real friendly. Told me he didn't have anything to say. actually ran when he saw other fans approaching.

JIM NIEDHART - a real ass. I actually liked his ring act until that night. He was approached by one fan (not me) with his hand extended who said "I would like to shake your hand." Neidhart's reply was "&!*@ off!".

JESSE VENTURA - Acted in his role both times I met him (once in his pre-commentator days) Plays his act real well.

GORILLA MONSOON - real easy to see the condescending air he conveys to the fans and fellow wrestlers. He must have something over McMahon's head because he sure doesn't add to the promotion in his air role.

In defense of the Titan people, they didn't know we were going to be there but the behavior was inexcusable. I wrote a letter about the incident and carbon copied to the WWF office and Basil DeVito (one of the Public relations people) called me at home. I hadn't put my phone number on the letter so I was impressed that they took the time. DeVito said that the wrestlers didn't want anyone backstage and I said that I understood that what with having to stay in role and the possibility of fans vs heel confrontations. He definitely backed off in the conversation when he could see that I understood the business. I told him I would have been appeased if I had gotten to talk to Don Muraco that night (who at the time had been doing outrageously good heel interviews). He couldn't move on anything to rectify the situation, but I think the call was nice. I was more than Crockett's camp had done over a letter I wrote to them concerning a much more volatile situation.

I also got to meet a few guys at a wrestling convention in Arlington, VA...KILLER KOWALSKI - was real nice trying to help out younger guys in the business and get them work as well as promote his school. He did a talk and was a riot; really knew how to work the room and spoke with genuine praise of some of the past greats he used to work matches with. A very religious man. He told some war stories that would convince those who say "it's fake" as to some of the dangers as well as how often the guys work hurt.

BRUNO SAMMARTINO - also talked and I got to talk to him one on one. Really a class act. He talked very openly and honestly about how he disliked the direction the business was going and how he had stayed on to help David. Talked about the Zbyszko feud and how it was a "shoot" and was allowed by the elder McMahon. Really in great shape for his age. He autographed a Forum for me (editor is now sweating bullets).

Next issue, the popular "Autograph Hound" returns with his observations on some various stars of different organizations.

If you would like to make a contribution to this column, be our guest. Your name will be changed or withheld on your request.

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Nothing like fun at the old ball park, er ah, rasslin' arena! Dusty's booking has certainly turned around here in the past couple of months and once again the NWA's television shows are something to look forward to. We'll get to all the results of the Crockett Cup later on in the report (I hope) but first, there are some things that need to be gone over so you know what's going on.

Before getting to the big angle, there's one that many of you may have missed. I almost did. On the NWA Main Event show on TBS that aired the morning of 4/23, they turned Johnny Ace, the flagbearer of the Shepherders. A lot of us skip that program and I do usually, but for some reason, this morning it was on and I was casually watching. The match featured the Sheeps against Kendall Windham & Ricky Santana. At the end, one of the Sheeps tried to get the flagpole from Johnny Ace but for some reason, Ace wouldn't give it up. The shepherd finally got it, but the momentum carried him over backwards and he wound up getting pinned. The two then worked over Johnny and then came yet another surprise; Rip Morgan, one of the Sheeps buddies from New Zealand, came in to help beat on Johnny some more. I expected the clip to be repeated on the Saturday evening show, but they were busy with other things.

Before we get into the big angle, there's something else that I missed. In fact, everyone that I talked with must have missed it too. Jimmy Garvin came out to do an interview and he made a reference to the terrible thing that Kevin Sullivan had done to his brother Ron. The trouble is, I don't remember Kevin doing anything. But whatever it was (and maybe they just haven't gotten around to showing us yet), it must have Ron out of action.

The big angle came completely out of the blue. They featured a rematch between Luger/Windham and Tully/Arn for the tag championships. There was just one clue that anything was going to go awry during the match and that was Jim Ross' and Tony Shivone's constant reference to Barry and Lex's friendship. After the third time they mentioned it, I started paying very close attention. The heels worked over Lex pretty good until Barry got a hot tag. Barry cleaned house while Lex was outside. Tully got put out of the ring and he started working on Lex, running him headfirst into the ring post. Lex took the ringpost at a pretty good clip and it looked great. He went down and Tully returned to help beat on Barry a while. While Lex is down, he blades (it took him quite a while, but then again, he doesn't have much experience with the blade) and is for all intents and purposes, dead. Barry is getting beat up and he needs a tag. He makes it to his corner, but Lex is still out.

JJ Dillon comes over and tells him, "I told you he wouldn't be there!" while Barry has a stunned look on his face. Lex tries to crawl back to the ring and Arn goes back to work on Barry. He whips Barry into the ropes and goes for a backdrop, but Barry stops short, grabs Arn by the hair and rams him (from a standing position) into the mat face first (one of the best moves I've seen as a counter to a backdrop - Barry and Arn carried it off to perfection). Barry heads back to the corner and once again, no Lex. JJ adds a few comments and Lex finally makes it back to the apron. Barry grabs his hand and slaps it for the tag (even though Lex is "in no condition to wrestle"), then body slams him into the ring. Lex is groveling, pulling up to Barry when Barry backs off and gives him a flying lariat. Barry walks out and Arn pins Lex. Barry goes back to the dressing room with JJ and the NWA has new tag team champs.

What an angle! They've been telling me since January that Barry was set to be the fourth horseman, but I figured that they would wait

for them to hold the championship before they turned him. Even though I had been told, this still caught me off guard. How effective was it? As soon as Barry made the four horsemen sign, my phone was ringing. It was Mom. "HOW COULD HE DO THAT!" My mother, the mark. So what we get is Lex not only doing a job, but also blading int he process. By allowing himself to get completely destroyed like this, it will immediately get Barry over as a heel.

But the angle isn't over yet! Dus...er ah, midnight Rider hits the ring and checks on Lex before heading back to the dressing room. He busts into the heel dressing room to confront Barry and every one (I mean EVERY ONE) of the NWA heels jump on him (Dusty reached up and untied his mask before they did...I figured he was going to pull the mask off himself just to show Barry who he was when I saw him do it, but I guess it was another of Dusty's "make it good" mistakes. He did it right in front of the freakin' camera though!). The babyfaces run in (what'd they do? Leave Lex layin' in the ring?) as the heels pull Dusty's mask off and cover his head. By the way, if there was any doubt as to where Doc is supposed to be, he's a babyface. He was helping to cover Dusty's head from the camera.

The end scene in the show is Barry trying on a four horsemen jacket and getting into the limo. The window rolls down and Barry holds out the Midnight Rider mask while giving the horsemen sign. Good stuff Maynard!

Before getting to the Crockett Cup report, a little nonsense... Mike Gunter called with some info on the Cup and he and some friends were speculating that Kendall Windham should now join up with the horsemen as well, but they should refer to him as the "Skinny Horseman In Training", an acronym that could be appropriate.

Speaking of new members, you know who would make the PERFECT addition to the Varsity Club? How about Bob Backlund? He could play it so that he's very naive and still wrestle as a face. Naturally there would be eventual confrontations that would lead to the rest of the club turning on him, but it would probably be more interesting than Kevin Sullivan against Precious. Backlund might even be talked into doing something along this line as it would go with the character he has always portrayed and the NWA wouldn't be embarrassed by him being a former WWF champ that they couldn't use anymore. I doubt we ever see it, but it would go over I think.

One more thing before the Cup results...when Rider went into the heels' dressing room, did you notice that Barry called him "Dream"? That's what everyone calls Dusty off camera. I thought that was interesting. I don't think we were meant to hear it, but just the fact that Barry called him that was worth mentioning.

THE THIRD ANNUAL JIM CROCKETT SR MEMORIAL TAG TEAM TOURNAMENT

The first night's action was held in Greenville, SC. Attendance ran in the neighborhood of 4500 which isn't that bad since the building only held something like 5000. The only no shoe of the tournament was Shane Douglas who "went home" it was said. Barry Windham, of course, did not work the first night as a result of his turn. But all they did was announce that Barry had withdrawn from the tournament. from some of the reports i got, the rumor of him jumping to the WWF went through the crowd since they were not aware of the angle.

The first night appeared to be a bit disorganized by the turn of Barry Windham. The program gave the bracketing for the tournament, but it was not closely followed. In face, if you try to put these results into brackets, I guarantee you will drive yourself nuts...I know, I tired and it don't work. Still, these are the results.

Kendall Windham and Italian Stallion were awarded a forfeit victory over Terminator and Green Machine when Green Machine didn't show up. Actually, Buggy did show, but he was late and for some reason they decided to spare the crowd by doing the forfeit rather than resceduling the match.

Next up, Ivan Koloff and Dick Murdoch beat Jimmy Valiant & Mighty Wilbur. I'm told it was every bit as bad as it sounds.

The Jive Tones beat Rocky King and Nelson Royal. Those are certainly two of the top twenty four teams in the world today.

The New New Breed, which consists of Chris Champion and Mark Starr beat the Twin Devils (which is the translated version of Dusty's horse's name, Dos Diablos).

Lightening Express beat Johnny Ace (as a heel - they hadn't shown the turn yet, but still, they never mentioned the Shepherders at this point either) and John Savage.

Shepherders defeated the Cruel Connection (we warned you about jobber teams).

the Varsity Club beat Steve Williams and Ron Simmons. Steve seemed to be bored and knew he was going home early.

Al Perez and Larry Zbyszko downed Joe Cruz and Ricky Santana.

Next up was the Prince of Darkness match. Now I've gotten three different reports on this card and all three pretty well agreed on the matches so far. This one, no one agreed on. One thought it was pretty good because of the comedy, one thought it was a bad joke, and the third said it was okay; not good, not bad. Anyway, both men were blindfolded and they took turns throwing phantom punches. Jim ended up pinning Sullivan after which the Varsity club came in and beat up Jim. Ron came in for the save, but Sullivan hit him with the "Spike" and put him out of action (oh! That's what Jim meant when he said on the TBS show that Ron had been injured). Jim was able to make a comeback and save Ron, but actually what this did was allow Sting to join forces with the partnerless Lex Luger.

The second round opened with Tully and Arn beating Kendall Windham and the Stallion. One has to wonder how Kendall reacted since the turn had not been shown yet. Hmmm.

Sting & Lex then beat Murdoch and Koloff.

Road Warriors made their first appearance and advanced by beating the Jive Tones.

Warlord and Barbarian had no problem with the New Breed.

Shepherders beat the Lightening Express.

Fantastics over Perez and Zbyszko.

Midnight Express beat the Shepherders in the final match of the evening. This had not been planned, but because they shifted things around so much, it had to be in order for every team to work at least once during the first night like they promised. Never mind that the Shepherders had to work three matches. This left seven teams (instead of eight) headed for

GREENSBORO, NC

4/23

The night opened with what everyone pretty well agreed was the best match of the tournament with the Fantastics beating the Varsity club.

Luger and Sting then beat the Midnight Express.

Warlord and Barbarian beat the Road Warriors when Animal clotheslined the referee by mistake. It should be noted that the Warriors did not go nuts over the DQ like they did last year.

Blanchard and Anderson beat the Fantastics in another pretty good match up.

Go back a minute. Before that match was the bullrope match between Rider and Dillon. Dusty pretty well pounded Dillon and JJ was a bloody mess. Dusty got the pin, but then surprise of surprises...another masked wrestler hit the ring and destroyed Dusty. The new guy calls himself the Masked Texan (oh, that's original) and had the initials "DM" on his chaps (my sources SWEAR that it was not Dave Meltzer). Doc ran

in to make the save but he was taken out by (get this) JJ Dillon. JJ hit him with the cowbell and Steve juiced. The Texan went after him and Dusty ended up making his own save.

Sting and Luger beat Warlord and Barbarian in a pretty good match that saw Sting pin Warlord.

Ric Flair retained his title, but lost the match to Nikita Koloff by DQ. The match went 31:00 "watchable" minutes. It started off not so good and went to pretty decent. Flair did his normal routines and Nikita looked okay. Barry Windham came to the ring with Flair, dressed in a suit and tie. The fans were for the most part heel fans, so Windham got a mixed reaction. Too early to tell if he's over or not as a heel.

Lex Luger and Sting won the tournament by defeating Tully and Arn in the finals when Luger pinned Arn. The finish involved Magnum at ringside (in fact all the matches with Luger and Sting with Magnum as their manager had them going up against a team with a manager...Magnum got to hit all three managers at one time or another during the night). with Arn going after him and Luger rolling him up for the win.

The heat Saturday night was incredible and sustained throughout the night. Attendance ran in the 8500 range out of a possible 15000 so reportedly, Crockett wasn't too pleased with that.

In the winning combination of Sting and Luger, Sting ended up doing most of the work through the first matches with Luger spending a total of only a couple of minutes in the ring. I guess they were saving him for the championship bout.

IN OTHER NEWS...The Fantastics have defeated the Midnight Express for the US tag titles in Chattanooga, TN in what was said to be a great match. I believe the change took place just in the last couple of days as the person I talked to had just been told of the change by one of the guys. It was taped for TV (naturally) and may be a strong candidate for match of the year (then again, remember, this was wrestlers talking with a fan). I'm not sure if it will air this weekend on TBS as I think the show had already been taped, but look for it the weekend of 5/7.

Also, there is some...make that a lot...of friction caused by the Barry Windham turn. A lot of the guys were upset that Dusty had to stick his nose in a situation that didn't really involve him. The turn and betrayal was between Luger and Windham and Dusty comes in and makes it a Midnight Rider thing, taking all the heat off of Windham and Luger and putting it on himself and Windham. I'm told they tried to talk him out of it, but Dusty doesn't think the Rider gimmick is over quite as big as what it should be and he of course wants that to be the main focal point of the promotion for the summer.

I used to have a boss like that. He would insist on going with me (and for that matter, anyone else in the branch) whenever we had something important going on. I had a sale lined up at a factory once that was going to net our company in the neighborhood of \$18,000. He had to ride along so he could take credit for it even though he came close to blowing the sale by opening his mouth every fifteen seconds. No one in the branch liked working for him and finally we just decided to keep big sales a secret until they were done and over with. He still took credit for them. He was a royal jerk to work for so I can imagine how the wrestlers feel working for someone who has to not only involve himself in every angle but also make himself the most important part of it. So Dusty shows us the sleeping genius he is as a booker and then turns around and shows us what a pompous ass he can be just a few seconds later.

Next time I tee off on Dusty, I promise I won't hold back and that I'll tell you what I really think.

PENCIL POINTS

BLACKBALLED WRESTLERS

It seems that there is more blacklisting of wrestlers now than there were of actors during the "McCarthy era". Ed Garea would do an article on why clacklisting is so prevalent in this business and on which wrestlers have been blacklisted.

It appears that wrestlers who are too aggressive get blacklisted because they hurt other wrestlers which in turn hurts the business. An enterprising promoter could hire all these whacky tough guys like the Great Wojo, Buzz Sawyer, David Shultz and even Hansen and Brody and let them go at it. This would lead to incredible action and if they turn into "shooting matches" it would be between guys who can handle it. The promoter who tries this will have unprecedented action in the ring and true acceptance from the fans for these realistic matches which may translate into BIG DOLLARS at the box office. Eventually these tough guys will gain enough respect for each other that they would mutually decide to tone down their acts in order to survive. But even at half speed, these would be the most exciting matches in the world!

Wrestling promoters in the midst of promotional wars, fighting for their lives cannot work together on anything. But the one thing that they do band together on is blacklisting. C'mon, guys; forget the grudges! You're at war with the omnipotent Vince. You need to cooperate. Use some intelligence. Utilize these whacky tough guys and make some money!

-DORE DeQUARTTRO-
-Howard Beach, NY-

A SWERVE OR WHAT?

What do you suppose the original plan for WMIV was considering Savage was allegedly supposed to have won the IC belt in February. Do you think that the "Honky Tonk Man refuse to drop the strap" story was a plant to fool newsletter editors and readers?

-JOE COUGHLIN-
-Boston, MA-

EDITOR: The original plan was to have Savage win the title (Intercontinental) on the 2/5 Prime Time show and not take part in the tournament at all. HTM refused to drop the strap and the WWF decided not to have Savage win it back until after WMIV. In the meantime, the original plan was for Ted DiBiase to win the tournament and hold the title until Hogan wanted it back. They let DiBiase have the belt for one measly week before they decided he couldn't draw (NYC and LA were two cities they ran that week). They then rearranged the tournament pairings so that Savage could meet DiBiase in the finals. Originally, Savage would have lost by DQ or a fluke to DiBiase in the semi finals. The person I got this information from wouldn't give it to me this straight (especially after the fact) if this wasn't the way it was supposed to have been.

READER REBUTTAL

I'd like to respond to a point in Joe Coughlin's V3I7 letter. Adrian Adonis doesn't instill homophobia, he exploits it. I am embarrassed by wrestling audiences. Any sane person watching bobby Eaton Kiss Jim Cornette realizes it's an act, and yet it drives wrestling audiences absolutely nuts. The real irony of all this is that one must assume that the wrestling audience is proportionately as gay as the rest of the country. Scantly clad men are not a turn off to gay males. I have often wondered how many of the teeanage heartthrobs types are really marketed at a female audience.

-BETSEY ANDERSON-
-Brighton, MA-

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RELIGIOUS GIMMICKS NOTHING NEW

I have been reading the comments by fellow readers of the Forum in regards to the gimmick of Ernest down in Memphis. I only caught Ernest on the FNN show and it was quite toned down from the first few times he came on the scene. The gimmick of bringing religion into the wrestling business is not something new.

Veteran fans will remember the original Sheik when he was at his peak and going up the ladder to success - he would never start a match without bowing to the East to praise Allah. Of course during TV tapes, the cameras were West, but who really cared. This was a regular ritual for the Sheik. If this was implemented today, there would be heavy heat.

Every wrestler from Japan (except Inoki) would do the salt ritual and stamp his feet to the mat chanting - this is traced back to the Sumo style of wrestling which has its roots deep in not only the culture of Japan but also in the Shinto religion.

My Franciscan traits were upset back in the mid sixties when a masked wrestler working under the name "The Mad Monk" appeared on the scene. I was a bit upset about that and felt offended.

However, probably no more so than the Jewish fans on the East Coast when Karl Von Hess made a comment in an interview about his upcoming match with Jewish wrestler Abe Jacobs. The comment as best I can recall posed the question to the Jacoby family to get ready and memorize the Kaddish (the Jewish Prayer for the dead) since Abe would not live out the match.

TV evangelists were not as "stars" as they are today to many. However, I do remember one winter night watching wrestling from Washington DC coming live - on a snowy TV screen and watching the transformation of one of the all time villains on the East Coast turn hero. Johnny Valentine came on the scene in a run in - he assisted a prelim boy (I think it was Herb Gerwick who became Killer Karl Kox). The prelim boy was being killed off by, I think, Buddy Rogers (or maybe it was the late Buddy Austin - I'm going back 30 years). Well, after the run in, Ray Morgan interviews Valentine, the most hated man in wrestling at that time (East Coast), and he said that he was in a hotel room and heard the Word while watching a Billy Graham crusade. Conversion... miracles do happen and the box office jumped for Vince Sr. & Co.

My feelings (were the same as yours on Ernest) as when I first learned of the wrestler wearing the brown habit of St. Francis into the ring. I do not applaud the actions, however, with a firm understanding of the business and as long as TV Evangelists are in the news, some promoter will pick up on it and use it within the framework of the promotions.

Take Kevin Sullivan's gimmick in recent years. Even though he has not come out and said that he is involved in the Satanic Cult, the projection of just that was made.

Wrestling is not the only entertainment that is working the religious theme. Blasphemy has become profitable in the movies, music and with certain comics. However, some day all these entrepreneurs will have to answer for their action and their judge won't be George Burns, but the Creator.

I remember talking to the late Bull Curry just a month before he passed away and he summed up the whole matter: "It's bad for business".

I am not a Bible toting person, however, I am a strong believer in the rights and respect for the Deity, something which has been lacking for years.

-TOM BURKE-

-Springfield, MA-

Everything here is revolving around Jerry Lawler night on 5/9. Lawler has promised that if on this night he doesn't defeat Curt Hennig for the AWA world's championship, he will retire from wrestling. A big party is being planned for whichever way the match goes. If he wins it will be a celebration and if he loses, it will be a going away party. Several other wrestlers will be on hand to do a thing like "This is Your Life".

This is not the first time that Jerry has threatened to retire if he failed to win a world's championship. The latest and most memorable time was a couple of years ago when he said he would win either the NWA title or the AWA title by the end of the year. It was all set to give him the NWA title, but Jim Crockett stepped in and nixed the idea. Lawler left for a while but finally returned after a tour of some other areas.

Now I don't know if he's going to win it this time or not. I'd say there's a better than 50% chance he will and then go on and fill any dates that Curt Hennig has booked while Curt rests his back. If he doesn't win, I bet he won't exactly lose the match either as I would expect to see him attacked during the pre-match ceremonies and be unable to work. We'll know for sure by next issue.

Earlier this month (4/4) Lawler had a stretcher match with Hennig. Missy threw her shoe into Curt, but Jerry intercepted it and clobbered Curt. A young jobber under a mask came in and tried to collect the bounty on Lawler that Gilbert had put there. Jerry destroyed him with a piledriver, but it gave Eddie the chance to sneak in with an ether laced handkerchief and put Jerry out so Curt got the pin.

This Monday night in Memphis (5/2) Jerry will wrestle Eddie and Missy is putting up her hair if Eddie loses.

They did a spot with Jeff Jarrett and Ken Wayne, one of those where you walk away wondering "who's the heel?". During an interview, they had some words. Ken made some sort of smart comment about Jeff needing a drink and handed him a glass of water which Jeff threw in Ken's face. Then during a televised six man tag match, Jeff accidentally dropkicked Ken. We don't know quite where this one is headed as Ken is reportedly leaving for a while and trying to get a few dates with Continental. To be continued, maybe?

Finally, with all the cooperation going on between groups, Downtown Bruno returned for a one time shot. Here's hoping that's a permanent thing before long.

CONTINENTAL WRESTLING FEDERATION

We usually don't carry a Continental report, but we've got enough info from here to do one, so why not? My thanks to JD McKay and a couple of others for providing the information here.

The first thing is the change of the name of the company from Continental Championship Wrestling to Continental Wrestling Federation. We can only speculate that it was changed because the backdrop featuring the CCW logo was destroyed during a brawl (or the other way around, maybe). The brawl was between Dr. Tom Pritchard and the Dirty White Boy, Tony Anthony which is one of the hottest and most entertaining feuds in the area. This one has everything from hair cutting to baseball bats. One entertaining skit was Missy Hyatt (who is doing a straight interview spot on the TV show) came out a little battered. She asked Gordon to have Tom come out. Gordon sent an assistant back to the dressing room to get Tom, meanwhile trying to get information out of Missy as to what happened. She refused to say anything. The show continued and finally, Gordon went back and brought out Tom and when he came out, the brawl between him and DWB was on. The backdrop went over the back of the raised stage that the announcer's podium is on destroying it.

Eddie Gilbert is in as a new booker and some of the guys are worried about their jobs. Nothing is really changing from his booking but there are a lot of folks are leaving and a few are reported coming in. Gilbert is using his talents to make the best out of the situations.

Wendall Cooley has left the area for WOW in Pensicola, FL and leaves behind a big void as the lead babyface to fill. No problem. Dutch Mantell was turned face and is filling the spot Cooley left.

Another departure is Jimmy Golden. A series of matches with Robert Fuller as his partner saw them taking on the Southern Boys (Steve Armstrong and Tracy Smothers) across the territory with the stipulation that the loser of the fall had to leave town. I would assume that Golden will join up with the USA promotion in Knoxville.

Continental will also be working with the Memphis group and Mike Graham & Steve Keirn's new promotion in Florida. This should give them a bigger talent base to draw on (as well as giving the same to the other groups as well) and keep things fresh. The egos in these groups don't play as big as role as say with the NWA & World Class working together so it might work out.

Curt Hennig is due in for some title defenses, but as outlined in the Memphis report, it may be Jerry Lawler filling those dates. Also due in for some work are Kamala and Terry Funk.

The biggest name being bantied around is Paul Dangerously and from what I hear, he's supposed to start full time around the first of May. I don't know quite what this means for Downtown Bruno, who has been the only manager in the area for some time now. He can't go back to Memphis until his year is up (Memphis is serious about the year thing) so he may get some sunshine down in Florida if there's not room for two managers.

Bruno was involved with a funny situation a time back with a local sports reporter. Bruno and Humongous appeared on a noon broadcast of the news and although I'm not sure what triggered the incident, the sports guy ended up getting bodyslammed by Humongous through the backdrop of the news set. All this time, Bruno is screaming, "NO! We're gonna get suuuuuued!"

Finally, there may be a possibility of Finacial News Network broadcasting this TV show rather than any others they've been talking about. Everything is still in the talking stages, but we'll try to keep you updated.

THE PHANTOM OF THE RING

BY ED GAREA

SHARED SUFFERING—Well, the most overhyped event of the year has come and gone and, remarkably, we are none the worse for wear. That event, of course, is Wrestlemania IV, or, as we have witnessed, Restholdmania IV. Honestly, I've seen more action in senior citizen bocce ball tournaments than I did in Wrestlemania IV. The outcome, as we all know, saw Randy Savage crowned as champ, but the real outcome may have been irreparable damage to future WWF pay-per-view events due to the underwhelming mediocrity of this one.

One would think that for the glamour show of the year, the boys would at least work, and if they couldn't work, they'd at least try. But, at least if neither was to be the case, why didn't McMahon have decisive endings? Nothing looks worse than two behemoths dancing with each other for 7 minutes only to see one of them DQ'd or counted out, for then one really begins to feel gypped. And if the hard-core fans feel gypped, how must the casual fans, upon whom so much of the success depends, feel? How many of them will return for the next big extravaganza?

I feel McMahon burned the crowd for this one. He set the tone for the rest of the evening by having Andre accompany Ted DiBiase for his first-round match with Jim Duggan. You didn't have to be clairvoyant to see this one coming. As usual, Andre interfered and won the bout for Ted. But this also hurt Ted's creditability for the future matches. How good could he be if he couldn't defeat a first-round opponent without help?

One could also see that the matches lacked intensity; they didn't have that do-or-die feeling that they needed to get over in a tournament format. The boys just seemed to be going through the motions. The other matches were no better: the battle royal might have been good if we weren't already treated to so many in past "special" events. I mean, how far can you push it? The Intercontinental title match was atrocious, as Beefcake seemed far more interested in cutting Jimmy Hart's hair than in winning the title. Now, I realize that this was the plan, but do they have to be so obvious about it? Do they really think no one could see through it? The tag title match used "Standard Finish #4"; overused and trite, as we've seen it before all too many times in the past. And that grudge match between Hercules and the Ultimate Stiff, well, I've seen eight-year old kids work a better match. These guys ought to be ashamed of themselves, but the real pity is that they aren't. As to the six-man match, the less said, the better.

Now we all had an idea that Randy would win the thing; if we didn't Jesse Ventura dispelled all doubt early on when he said that the winner would have to wrestle four times. A quick check of the bracketing proved Jesse right. The championship match, in fact, was the biggest disappointment of the evening. First, it was more of the same old tune: Ted comes down with Andre; Andre interferes, Toots sees her man in danger, runs back to the dressing room and fetches Uncle Hulkie, who makes everything come out all right for little Randy. It was the chair and not Randy, who own the match and the belt. But this also leaves Randy as a tainted champion; one who was unable to win without the help of his second. That has got to hurt in the future as has the general lackluster performance of the participants. You've got to leave them begging for more, not less.

A few assorted observations on the card:

- Will Virgil turn babyface after Ted's treatment?
- Can the WWF survive without Hulk for the summer?
- Is Badnews Brown to get the big push for matches with Randy?
- The intermission was the best part of the card.
- Muraco should be congratulated for at least trying in his matches and

CLASS ACT OF THE MONTH April 1988

We have a couple of nominees this month that are well worth mentioning. The first runner up is Dave Meltzer and a few magazine writers who were approached by the National Enquirer to "confirm" an obvious fictitious story about either Andre the Giant or Hulk Hogan (see Dipstick of the Month below). Dave's integrity (along with some other magazine writers that he failed to name and I won't for obvious reasons) is a fine example of how the people who "destroy wrestling with their Kay-Fabe sheets" aren't actually out to hurt the business, but strive to preserve wrestling's al but shining reputation.

The winner this month goes to Bobby Fulton. Although a gross incident and one we wouldn't like to see happen all the time, Bobby is the winner here as a result of his performance in Boston.

Bobby was obviously sick before his match with partner Tommy Rogers against the Midnight Express. Still, he went to the ring to perform. He got sick in the middle of the match and threw up, but he continued to work the match despite his sickness. In this day and age of primadonnas who won't work with a hangnail, Bobby fulfilled his obligation to the fans by going on with the match. Instead of pulling out of the match and letting someone else work in his place (which would have disappointed the fans - fans that wouldn't have the chance to see the NWA again for a whole year due to contractual obligations with Titan and the arena), Fulton displayed the class that goes with the honor of being named April's Class Act of the Month.

DIPSTICK OF THE MONTH April 1988

On the other side of the ledger, Bobby was also considered for this award for throwing up near the fans. We have to remember Bob Owens taking this less than coveted award for a time when he had a bowl movement in his trunks while working a match out in Kansas City. Bobby was considered, but never seriously.

Bob Roop and Red Roberts were front runners for this award this time as they verbally attacked Gordon Solie for leaving their show. Usually when a wrestler walks out of a territory without notice, the words and slurs directed at him are somewhat justified. In the case of an announcer, they may have been, but when they drug his name through the mud as much as they did, this was inexcusable. They went as far as to tell the home viewers that Gordon actually hated kids. The man who was responsible for listing missing children on wrestling programs hating kids! Fortunately Roop and Roberts made themselves look much worse than they made Gordon by harping on the fact that he had left. They are awarded the first runner up this month.

First place goes to the idiots at the National Enquirer. Often we wondered where they came up with the cock and bull stories that they print and now we have an insight. They approached several wrestling writers (including magazine writers and newsletter editors) to confirm a fictitious story that had Andre serving time in Japan for murder. When told that the story was not true, these journalistic brainchildren said they didn't care if it was true or not, that they just wanted someone to confirm it. We would hope that their newsstand sales would suffer from this incident (I know of at least one sale a week they're losing), but for now we'll have to be content with presenting them with the first ever DOUBLE-DIPSTICK of the month award for being twice as stupid as anyone has been in the past.

GLOBAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

by Jeff Bowdren

Another TV taping for the GWA took place 4/30 in Pompano Beach, FL. This was definitely the best set of taping they have done so far with several good matches.

The biggest news is that the Malenkos, Joe & Dean, returned from their tour of Japan to capture the GWA tag belts from Rusty Brooks and jumbo Baretta. The first hour had the boys run in in their street clothes as Ox Baker's "surprise" tag team and pin Brooks and Baretta by rolling up the champs. Brooks and Baretta are managed by Boris Melenko, so I guess this is wrestling's version of Family Feud.

The 2nd hour saw them score a non title win in what may have been the greatest match in the history of the GWA. Joe and Dean started this match virtually unknown by the fans, and by the time it was done, the boys were more over than anyone in the whole promotion. Lots of Japanese moves including a double clothesline into the corner that Sampson Fuyuki and Takashi Kawada use. I can safely say that they are among the top ten teams in the world. The 3rd hour saw an interview where Brooks tells Boris to "Learn to control his kids". Melenko was torn between the two teams and leaves. The 4th hour had the title change with the Malenkos getting the pin after a double dropkick.

Another angle had Eric Embry in from World Class to defend his jr. heavyweight title against Steve "the Party Animal" Collins. the departure of Col Kirschner will apparently leave Collins as the lead babyface. He does sort of a Ric Flair babyface role but is trying to look like Magnum. How about Magnum SC? What's funny is that the last set of tapings were spent trying to establish a heel turn and now they drop that and make him a hero. He had 3 matches with Embry with Eric making him look like a star. All three matches were good, but the last one featuring a wild brawl, reminiscent of the UWF with about ten pull aparts and heads being slammed into concrete walls. No word on whether Embry will be back. Collin's valets "the Party Girls", are Dominique and Anne Marie and seem to have their own fan club. One guy held up a sign that said, "Who needs Missy Hyatt when you have the Party Girls! I love you Anne Marie!" She may be the best looking valet in wrestling which is quite a statement when you consider I'm the founder of the Fallen Angel fan club.

CALGARY STAMPEDE

No more news on the crack down by the commission here. But most of the action has been contained by the ropes in the past couple of weeks.

Last issue we reported that a few wrestlers from Japan might be making their way over for some training matches (Japan sends their guys to Stampede to gain some ring experience before using them in Japan so that they can be completely ready to work the Japanese style of wrestling). The first has arrived and he is Yang Chung. He debuted on the April 16th show and he's set to challenge Chris Benoit for the mid-heavyweight belt.

Eight man bunkhouse matches are going around the horn and drawing good crowds every where. The matches feature Rip Rogers, Kerry Brown, Makhan Singh & Johnny Smith against Owen & Bruce Hart, Jason the Terrible, and Brian Pillman. Trent Walters, our correspondent up north reports that the matches are fantastic and long. In fact, from the period of April 8 - 16, Trent figures that each man worked over four hours each!

Steve DiSalvo is among the returnees, coming back from South Africa. Gama Singh and he must have passed in an airport somewhere as South Africa is where he is headed.

Other notes...Jon Holiday is showing some good improvement as is Biff Wellington... Valcan Singh (Gary Albright) is the newest heel manager in the area and is using Abdul Wizar as a Bubba Rogers type body guard.... And finally, Brick Bronsky, an extremely green muscleman and Willie Seymour have formed a tag team that would appear to be bad beyond description. Everytime I hear of how bad a tag team is, I can't help remembering being subjected to a team of Junk Yard Dog and Ivan Putski in Peoria last September.

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

And i thought things fromhere would be kinda quiet for a while after their break. Shows how much I know.

Actually there isn't alot going on but they did a bunch of TV this past week. Hopefully by the end of the report, someone will have sent the details, but if not, it'll be something to report next time.

First off, some of the WWF guys didn't take a post-wrestlemania break. They were given the tedious task of touring Europe (a tough job, I know, but somebody had to do it). I'm told there were about five different stops along the way including Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland. Results from the Switzerland show can be found in the results section. Anyway, the shows ran the week of April 1 - 8.

There has been an attempted talent raid on some of the NWA guys according to one of my WWF sources. He tells me that McMahon offered Barbarian and Warlord somewhere in the mid six figures to come in and feud (as babyfaces) with Demolition. Barbie and Warlord refused the deal for various reasons, the main one being the travel. This left McMahon (and a bunch of others in Titán) shaking their heads. Apparently, Barbie was the one who nixed the deal; Warlord will follow his lead, it seems.

Wanna know how to make sure NOT to be shown on a TV taping you attend? Have your daughter and yourself hold up the four horsemen sign to the camera when it points your direction. They cut the scene from the tapes of us doing that although you can pick me out of the crowd every once in a while.

This past weekend they finally aired the incident between Rick Rude and Jake Robert's wife. I had been told about it in Springfield and only touched on it briefly a couple of issues back. Here's what happened. Instead of Rude having a bunch of girls come to the ring to choose the one he wanted to kiss, he just chose one at random from the audience. He went up to her and they did some standard schtick with her saying she didn't think he was sexy, etc. She finally told him who she was and he started insulting her and Jake. She stood up and slapped him (she looked like she was scared to hit him) and then went into one of the worst acting performances feigning fright, that you'll ever see. Jake came out and saved not only her, but the entire skit as he jumped on Rude and they had a roll around brawl with other wrestlers coming out for the pull apart finish. Not bad stuff for the WWF. It's not the fantastics-Midnight Express, but still not bad for these guys.

How long will Mr. Savage keep the title? That depends on his ability to draw as champ. If he does well over the summer (in other words, any thing over their expectations) he could remain as champ for a while. We had originally thought that he would hold the belt until July or so before dropping it to DiBiase who in turn would lose to Hogan on the August Pay Per View special. But if Savage can draw on his own, Hogan will remain a draw with or without the belt, thus allowing them to split the two up and draw some decent crowds in two different cities each night. Like i said though; it depends entirely on Savage's drawing power.

Vince continues to suffer from some mistakes. I got a report from Ron LeMeiux (A big salute to Ron...he went to BOTH the Superstars taping and the Challenge taping...that's 45 matches in a two night span!). What happened to clearly point out the mistake was an appearance by Hulk Hogan. Hogan had not been announced for the card but he made an appearance and beat Boris Zhukov. Later in the card, Randy Savage wrestled Andre the Giant and after five minutes of Andre pounding on Randy, the crowd started chanting for Hogan. As Ron pointed out in his report, if Hogan had not appeared before Savage, there would have been no chant.

If Vince wants to get Savage over as champ, he's going to have to do it with Savage leading the way in the fans' eyes. Not by having to hide behind Hogan at every turn. Hagan never appeared and Andre won the match on DQ when Randy grabbed a chair and hit Andre twice for the DQ.

Also from the TV tapings, there's a new Islander. It's former jobber Sivi Afi who is now billed as High Priest Sivi Afi complete with tatoos all over like the late Peter Maivia. We haven't seen him for a while so I guess he's been off getting tattooed. Actually, I'm surprised they didn't do this one earlier. See, they could run the Islanders as a two man tag in two different cities each night if they were to use Tama's twin brother (no, I'm not being facetious. Tama does have a twin). The twin could team with Haku and team Tama with Afi and the Islanders could then be in two places at once. Shoot, if they gave them the tag belts, there could be two cities a night running tag title defenses. No thanks needed, Vince. Just send cash.

Other notes of interest from the tapings (Superstars in New Haven CT, and Challenge/SNME in Springfield, MA): Bret Hart worked a singles match without Jimmy Hart. He still wears the same outfit as he did in the tag team.

STOP THE PRESSES! It appears that Harley Race's career is over as a result of a freakish accident/illness. This past week while NOT wrestling, Race had his intestines literally explode. He was rushed to a hospital (I'm still not clear on where this happened) and spent several hours in surgery as doctors tried to save his life. They were successful, but the last report I have is that he is in serious condition, upgraded from critical. As for the cause, I talked with a nurse and without knowing the exact details, she tells me that there are several things which could have caused this to happen including a dietary imbalance, ulcers, and/or even a blow to the midsection, much the same as which killed Harry Houdini. But that would have meant a shoot which we would have heard about before this. Everything happened outside the ring, so I doubt if it can be attributed to his wrestling at all. By my best guess, I would put him at around 45 years old, better than half of which he's been a professional wrestler. Our prayers are with him and his family.

Getting back to the TV tapings, the Challenge taping was combined with a Saturday Night's Main Event taping for broadcast tonight (4/30). On the SNME tape Beefcake beat Danny Davis by putting him to sleep. He followed the match with the usually cut and blow dry and mirror. Dan Reilly provides the ratings here and this one got an F-.

Duggan beat Hercules by DQ. Andre and Heenan came o ringside with Hercules. Duggan got the flying tackle and went for the pin, but Heenan jumped in and kneed Duggan in the back. Hacksaw was going to hit Heenan, but Andre came in and he and Herc doubled up on Duggan. Dingo came out and made the save with the 2 x 4. Grade: B

Demolition beat the bulldogs by DQ. End came with Fuji hitting DK outside the ring. DD got Mathilda and chased Fuji back to the dressing room. When they came back they had Fuji's cane split in two and they started using them on Demolition. The DQ resulted when DK pushed the referee. Grade: B.

DiBiase pinned Muraco. Good workrate, but a terrible ending. DiBiase just slammed Muraco and Don go his foot on the ropes. The ref didn't see it and counted the pinfall. Grade: C.

Savage over One Man Gang. The referee was busy with Liz and Slick went to hit Randy with the cane. Randy moved, OMG got hit instead, and Randy got him with the flying elbow. Grade: C.

Ron notes that they didn't tape enough for three hours of challenge so it looks like we'll be seeing quite a few film clips during the next three weeks. Other notes from the taping...Mike McGuirke has replaced

Mel Phillips as the ring announcer...Butch Reed did not appear and his theme music was used by OMG so Reed may be history.

we all know that Vince is the head of the WWF, but I don't think a whole lot of us realize the power and influence that his wife Linda has. She has been exerting her influence as of late with a couple of incidents.

The first was with Bruno. She was more responsible for his departure than they are letting anyone think. She fired off a letter to him telling him that he could no longer use his copyrighted name in any other business endeavors. Bruno, of course, has gone to work co-promoting a hotline with Lou Albano. I guess the name they're referring to is "the living legend" as he is still going by Bruno Sammartino.

But Bruno wasn't the only member of the Sammartino family to get a letter from the Mrs. McMahon. David also got one stemming from the incident in Watertown NY where he went after a fan.

All Titan personnel have received letters from the McMahon's in regards to going in the crowd after fans too. In effect the letter said that if you do, you will be immediately terminated. There has been some problem with that in the past, mainly involving Randy Savage when he was a heel.

This next is a little disorganized as I got the information third hand (the second person to have it was Mom, so...). Supposedly, the Larry King show which airs on the mutal Radio Network late at night, had wrestling as a topic. According to that show (or at least one caller who may have been a mark thinking he was smart) John Studd will be returning shortly. I have heard absolutely nothing from the Titan people on this one although the rumor tends to go around about this about every three months. One of these times, it bound to be true.

Titan has just started running full time again, and from early reports, the live shows have a better than expected advance gate, especially where Savage and DiBiase are headlining. Whether the interest is sustained or not remains to be seen.

WORLD CLASS

I guess the Parade of champions on May 8 should be the big news out of here, and it is to a certain extent. But one of the matches lined up for the card and the story behind the story is even bigger.

First off, Michael Hayes has taken over the booking chores since his arrival in World Class. Everything to this point between himself and the other Freebirds has been his ideas. The match that will be the gimmick match to end all gimmick matches on the 8th is not his idea. It was Dusty's, but Michael beat him to the punch. Let me explain the stip and conditions:

The match will feature three rings (hey, this sounds like the WWF), but instead of sitting side by side, they will be stacked one on top of another. Running through the middle of each ring will be a fireman's pole to allow access to each ring. Wait! We're not done yet. A cage will surround the three rings. Now I don't know who's going to be in the matches as of yet, but after seeing how a ring is constructed and all, I'm certainly glad it's not me. The two upper rings won't be able to have the spring underneath that gives bounce, so I doubt if we see a whole lot of bumps taken in them. It's rare to see a ring either collapse or break, but that's due to the supports running across it (anymore it's the obscure independents that have rings that are 100 years old that break or collapse), but with the hole cut in the middle, that's going to take away some of the strength and support as well.. Face it folks, there ain't no safe place to be in that conglomeration!

Here's the story behind the story. the idea was originally Dusty's and he was planning on using it as the gimmick match during the Great American Bash series like he did with the War Games concept last year. I understand that he's passing little green apples because Hayes stole the idea. I'm not sure if this had anything to do with the nWA making such heavy demands when World Class wanted to work with them a few weeks back, but I can guarantee you this: There won't be any cooperation between the two in the next few light years.

Chris Adams is back at work already. That is amazing considering that he probably won't look anything like what he used to with the way he was messed up with the dropkick that Mike George hit him with. He went back to work three days after the incident wearing a catcher's mask. It's true that his matches aren't setting any time limit records, but still, that takes an awful lot of guts. Or stupidity. I'm not sure which. The story that they're telling is that Taylor "paid off a wrestler in another territory to injure" Chris.

Scandar Akbar is back and managing Black Bart. Last issue I had a hunch that he would be and just touched on it, mentioning that there appeared to be something going on between Black Bart and Bill Irwin.. Here's what it is: They were to have a match on TV. Bart said that they were cut from the same cloth (I guess Texans talk that way) and that they should form a team. Bill said no and the match was on. Bart wound up being DQ'd as a result of interference by John Tatum and Jack Victory. This led to a six man tag with Bart/Tatum/Victory vs Irwin and the Simpsons which saw the faces win again by DQ, this time when Akbar showed up out of the blue and helped hold Irwin while Bart used the branding iron on him.

I just thought of one other problem with the triple-decker match... how are the fans at ringside ever going to be able to see what's going on in the top two rings?

PULSE ON PORTLAND

by Greg Anderson

Jesse Barr returned home on 4/9 as he faced Avalanche. The match saw Avalanche get some hard way blood when he cut his cheek on the top of the ringpost. Barr won the first fall via DQ when Av worked over Barr's knee on the ropes and shoved ref Sandy Barr to the floor. Sandy drove Av off with a chair. The time limit expired in the second fall but Avalanche whipped Jesse into the ropes, Barr jumped over and behind Av and when the huge guy turned around, he was belted both Barrs (this looked greaat). Jesse later revealed that he was here to avenge his brother Art's mistreatment by the Grappler. Jesse and the hooded heel were signed to meet on 4/16 with Tony Borne as referee.

In another incident on the card, Al Madril turned heel when he interfered in the Grappler-Coco Samoa title match causing Samoa to be pinned after he hit Coco with a chair as he was pinning Grappler. Sandy Barr had been bumped out of action. A grudge bout was signed for 4/16. On a post match interview, Grappler paid Al \$500 for the dastardly deed.

On the 4/16 show, the Assassin and Art Barr held Avalanche and Mike golden to a fall apiece draw to earn themselves a title shot at the heels on the 4/23 card. Next it was time for the Grappler-Jesse barr grudge match.

Tony Borne announced that he was disqualifying himself and brought out Luke Brown (One half of the Kentuckians tag team from the sixties who referees cards in other NW cities) to officiate the bout. Borne said he would sit at ringside to keep outside interference away. The match had a great finish. Both men came off the ropes with punches knocking each other for a loop. Jesse sailed into the referee who took a light bump and Jesse landed on the arena floor. At this point, Art Barr ran out with a sack and kneeled down beside his brother. They pulled Jeess's "JimmyJack Funk" gear out of the bag and Jesse put the mask and hangman's noose with the cowbell on. Tony held Grappler by the trunks from outside the ring and Barr reentered the squared circle. Jesse continually belted his opponent with the cowbell. Everytime Grappler would leave the ring, Borne would toss him back in for more punishment. A bullrope match was signed between the two for 4/23.

The third match on this card was the grudge match between Samoa and Madril. Al attacked his foe as Cocco entered the ring, but Samoa fired back. Outside the ring, Samoa dropped Madril, spread-eagled on the guard rail which immediately collapsed. Samoa choked Madril with part of the rope. Back in the ring Coco worked Al over further and Grappler came out and escorted Al back to the dressing room giving Samoa a forfeit win. A street fight rematch was also signed for the 4/23 show.

to combat Billy Jack Haynes' first scheduled card on 4/30, Don Owens set up a benefit show and announced Roddy Piper would be flying in from Hollywood for the event. Now Haynes has moved his debut event back to 5/7. Haynes debut at Oregon City will be a tournament for the ONW title. Announced as appearing are Black Studd Williams (Kareem Muhamed), billed as from Harlem and undefeated, Kevin Kelly, Tiger Chung Lee (yuck), JT Southern, Steve Gatorwolf (double yuck), Brian Adams, Rip Oliver, Mike Miller, Cpl Kirschner, Logger Luke Haggerty (probably a Haynes wrestling camp grad) and "many other world ranked professional wrestlers". Ticket prices run \$2.00 over Owen's.

The no shows continue. Skip Luther did not appear on 4/16 as announced. Buddy Rose was at the arena on 4/2, but was not allowed to work for some reason. It also appears that Coco Samoa has departed (more next issue). Finally, with Roddy Piper on board, the 4/30 TV show should be hot.

RESULTS FROM ALL OVER

As you can see, we're down on results for about the third straight issue. Send 'em in is about the only thing i can say other than sorry! I'm especially interested in results other than the WWF. Here we go with what we got...

4/1 LUGANO, SWITZERLAND (WWF) - courtesy of Kurt Gebbs...Lombardi beat Boone... Koko beat Bass...Ultimate beat Andre by DQ...Jim Duggan pinned Hercules...Beefcake downed Valentine...Roma/Powers over Demolition in a non title match...NOTES: They went from here to Italy and France...Andre hit the ref for the DQ and then bear hugged Warrior...Duggan came out to make the save... Hercules did a clean job.

4/23 PROVIDENCE, RI (WWF) - courtesy of Anthony Parillo...Boone drew Lombardi... Islanders & Heenan beat Bulldogs & Koko... Bravo won by forfeit over Patera...Jose luis Rivera pinned Barry Horowitz...DiBiase beat Savage by count out...Sherri defeated desiree Peterson...Ron Bass was DQ'd vs JYD...Ultimate Warrior pinned Hercules. NOTES: Attendance 8000+...Patera was injured earlier in the evening in an arm wrestling contest with bravo causing hi to miss the match and forfeit it...Virgil tripped Savage coming off the ropes and he went after Virgil causing the count out...Koko was going for the gourdbuster when Heenan tripped him from outside the ring...all three situations sets up return matches for next month.

4/23 DETROIT (WWF) - courtesy of Beth Sackett... Iron mike pinned Scott Casey...Bret Hart drew Bad News Brown...Rougeaus beat the killer Bees...Andre beat Duggan by Count out...Jake roberts defeated Greg Valentine... Honky Tonk beat Brutus by count out...Rick

Rude over Don Muraco...Demolition beat Strike Force...NOTES: Attendance: 4000...the Rougeau Brothers played the heel role vs Bees...Andre hit Duggan with the 2 x 4 then Duggan was counted out...Brutus pulled the dress and wig off Peggy Sue and found Jimmy Hart underneath (she as in Providence, RI)...Rude used the ropes for leverage for pin on Muraco.

4/24 LANDOVER, MD (WWF) - courtesy of Dan Schnitzer...Horowitz beat Rivera (F)...Brown drew hart (C)...One Man Gang went double DQ with Bigelow (D-)...Warrior pinned Hercules (Z)...Demolition beat Strike Force (C+)...Boone pinned Lombardi (C)...Sherri pinned Peterson (C)...Bravo over Patera (C-)...DiBiase over Savage by count out
NOTES: Bravo kept challenging Patera to an arm wrestling contest. They finally did and patera won the first contest. In the second, Bravo turned the table over on him and patera was unable to continue so he forfeited the wrestling match. Same thing that happened in Providence.

4/27 ALLENTOWN, PA (WWF) - courtesy of Gary Howerter...Outback Jack pinned Conquistador #1 (D)...Joe LeDuc beat Rivera (C)...Velvet McIntyre beat Judy Martin (C)...Stallions over Bolsheviks by DQ (B)...SD Jones over George Skaalund (D)...Sam Houston defeated Danny Davis (B)...JYD pinned Ron Bass (D-)
...NOTES: 1500...noshows included Jim Neidhart and George Steele...Houston Davis best match of the night...Danny was particularly funny especially when fans started Danny Sucks chant...a local promotion will run a show 5/21 with Nasty boys vs Midnight Rockers, Rose/Sommers vs Samoans with Lou Albano...Col. DeBeers vs Slaughter plus Rocky Johnson, David Sammartino, Johnny Valiant and Bruno Sammartino.

MISCELLANEOUS STUFF

And we're off and running once again in our never ending trivia game that has no winner (sort of like the NWA's judging rules). Last issue's trivial-type question was "How many times did Harley Race and Larry Hennig hold the AWA tag team championships?" Answer: Three. Here's this issue's question along with a little set up: Roddy Piper once busted a beer bottle on his forehead during an interview segment, just to prove how tough he was (pretty gross stuff...he started bleeding immediately). This was in Calgary and he and his partner were feuding with the Shepherders. Here's the question; Who was Roddy's partner? Answer next time.

In the video review department, I had time this past week to watch that movie I've been wanting to see, the 1972 movie "The Wrestler". Had I seen the movie before last issue, I could have redone the feature or the Ego that ate wrestling. What we have is a Verne Gagne produced film which stars Verne Gagne and is basically ABOUT Verne Gagne. It's about an aging, balding star named Mike Ballard who is nearing the end of his career. An up and coming star named Billy Taylor comes in to challenge him (Billy Robinson). Mike's wife is after him to retire because of what happened to Ray Gunkle and a fictitious wrestler in the movie (they died in the ring). There's some good wrestling, and even a cute barroom scene with Dick Murdoch and Dusty Rhodes (both of whom are excellent) that is funny. Sam Menacher plays a gangster and is bad beyond words. Pee Wee Herman could have been more believable in that role! The movie ends with no warning which was somewhat merciful of the producers. I'm glad I didn't have a driver's license in 1972 cos if I did, I would have probably gone to see it in a theatre which would have probably turned me off wrestling for good. On the positive side, a young Rick Flair is in the movie and the wrestling scenes aren't bad (save the horrendous lighting). As for entertainment value, I'd rate it slightly below peeling paint and slightly ahead of the Slammies. My thanks anyway go out to Charles Hodgekisson for sending the tape along (and Yes, Charles, you did tell me "I told you so").

Speaking of movies, I wonder whatever happened to Body Slam...that movie that was to star Roddy Piper. This past weekend I saw the soundtrack album while shopping. It has Piper and Lou Albano in it and the only other name I recognized was Dirk Benedict who was Starbuck in Battle Star Galactica. I was reading Jay Johnstone's "Over the Edge" (sequel to "Temporary Insanity") and he has a part in it as an announcer he says. I checked with the local video store and they've not heard of it or do any of their books list it either in the way of coming releases, new releases or much of anything else. Maybe it went to parts unknown along with McMahon's twin referee skit and Dusty's Blackmail angle.

TIRADE DEPARTMENT... In working with the UAWF, I think that I have run into more jerks and all out lamebrains than with any other project I've ever undertaken in or out of wrestling. First off is a group that promises to work with us. They agree to sign birthday cards for members and provide us with updates from their federation. It was going to work well both ways because they were a fledgling group on the east coast and our organization was also getting off the ground. Then the worm turned, so to speak as they were promised a national cable contract. Suddenly, since they were going to be in "ten million homes" each week, they didn't need us. They threw away about 50 cards that we had sent them plus the envelope for returning them (I'd bet they cut the stamps off first though). I was told point blank that we couldn't do anything for them so they would not be working with us. I guess that's the reason why I'm so overjoyed that their cable contract fell through. If they ever come crawling back, I'm gonna stomp on their

fingers! Along the same lines, we got a membership application from a guy who after receiving his member ship package decided to opt for a refund. No problem. It wasn't worth mentioning until he started writing to people crying about the most trivial of problems. He was mostly upset that charter members get two votes in voting matters rather than just one. This was originally set up so that people who have been members for a long period of time would have more say than those just joining. For example, several years down the road, I thought it would be fair for those who have been members for say five years to have more say than those who joined say a year ago. The ones who have been around longest have paid their dues (other than monetary dues) and suffered through the tough times of start up and they should have more of a voice. Maybe I'm wrong, and if I am, we'll change the rules by a vote. One thing I will not change on though is those people who join just so they can go to the convention. Fifteen bucks is an awful cheap way to get discounts on motels, transportation, and wrestling tickets as well as meeting friends. If you are going to join with no intentions of supporting the group but rather just getting convention rights, save your money. We want people who will join to strengthen the bond of wrestling fans, not those who are going to use us just for personal gain. Address for the UAWF is Box 215, Galesburg, IL 61402 and dues are \$15.00 per year. Associate memberships are \$2.00 per person. If you want just more info, send a SASE.

Whew! I feel better.

Does anyone out there have any information on a guy named Tiger Powers? We was supposedly a wrestler in the late forties and through the mid fifties. I've checked everywhere I can find and there isn't any info on him at all. He was from this area and he past away recently. The obituary said that he had been a professional wrestler. His family doesn't seem to know much about it other than he held some regional championship here in the midwest. Let me know if you have any info on him.

READER REQUEST: BRIAN TRAMEL, 1806 Self Circle, #8, Jonesboro, AR 72401 is looking for someone to provide him with the Continental TV show. He has lots in the way of tapes he can trade for it.

There are still four issues of the yearbook left and a copy can be yours for just \$11.00 which includes 1st class postage. Next issue, the results of the 1st round of the WF tournament (part 1) and the pairings for part 2 of the first round. Also, the Third Fall will return as we skipped it last issue because of cutting the bulletin by four pages. I promise.

LETTER CAMPAIGN TIME AGAIN...Got an article this week that deals with a pending government regulation where the FCC would limit the availability of superstations like WGN & WTBS, WWOR, etc. By limiting the superstations, it would benefit local stations by not having to compete with them. To help defeat this crazy notion, send a letter to the Honorable Edward J Markey, 2133 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington DC 20515-2107 and ask him to contact the FCC and voice your "strong objection to SYNDICATED EXCLUSIVITY", as it would not be in the best public interest. No need to mention Wrestling Forum.

I believe that wraps up another edition of the Forum. There is some independent wrestling going on in Chicago tonight (4/30) at the Ampitheatre featuring Nord vs Brody. If anyone goes, let me know how it came out. Meanwhile, we'll see you in a couple of weeks. Bye/

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Yeah, we know it's a pretty silly way to tell how current your subscription is, but it's the only way we could think of at the time..If the ink on your mailing label is black, your subscription is current. If it's green, that means this is your next to last issue. If it's red, that means this is your last issue unless you renew. Silly, but true.

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